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Lessons in Communications & Improving Dialogue Between (and Within) DOE and Contractor Organizations

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Lessons in Communications & Improving Dialogue Between (and Within) DOE and Contractor Organizations

- Communication can be improved between DOE and contractors
- Communication can be improved within DOE
 - Safety basis, program, facility representatives
- Communication can be improved within contractors
 - Safety basis in a facility, across an entire site, program, facility management, institutional programs
- Lessons learned indicate that addressing this issue using a cohesive approach best improves dialogue and common understanding

In the beginning...

- Starting in the 1990's, there have been a number of approaches evolving at different sites from different perspectives
 - DOE and contractor, facility and institution
- One early DOE approach successfully made information accessible to facilitate communication
 - **List your facilities** – DOE created the tank waste spreadsheet, listing each tank by type (e.g., Hydrogen Watch List) as tracking the migration of the sampling trucks during an important period in DOE history
 - Used by diverse management to follow complex operations and paperwork
 - Used to facilitate discussions at meetings within, and between, DOE and contractors
 - **Understand your facilities** – DOE created a system to assemble real time data from tank thermocouples to monitor burping tanks
 - Two prime contractors provided their part to DOE; results shared by all
 - DOE was able to rapidly respond to Congressional inquiries
 - **Document your facilities** – Contractor put relevant documents online sorted by tank
 - **Document your progress** – Contractor VP put real time data online to track progress
- Since then, our community has matured significantly

Concepts behind mature communication processes

- Improved DOE/contractor communication at several levels
 - Workload planning meetings and documentation for both DOE and contractor
 - Safety basis projects across facilities
 - Prioritization of projects/assignments
 - Tracking of completion of projects/assignments
 - Policy – Policy dialogue
 - Working meetings to address specific issues
 - Standing meetings to go over topics (come and go as issues arise and go away, processes mature, staff changes)
 - Contractor internal meetings on policy between central institution and facilities

Open and clear communications are necessary

Concepts behind mature communication processes

- Key steps used for DOE safety basis submittals
 - Scope and Key Issues Statement (SKIS)
 - Conceptual framework for major submittals (e.g., DSA/TSR annual updates, SBAs, TSR changes,) that outlines what is to be done and documents agreed upon path forward before moving forward
 - Agreement between facility, safety basis, DOE
 - Prepare your document
 - Independent Team Review (aka Red Team Review)
 - DOE may ask for the Independent Team Review Report
 - Institutional review
 - Formally submit document to DOE
 - Approval process
 - Informal RCRs
 - Formal RCRs
 - Resubmit document or page changes to DOE
 - COAs when both sides agree to disagree
 - COA tracking
 - Focus on what - not how, allowing contractor to try different approaches
 - Inevitably resolution must be achieved

Process and expectations are understood by all parties

Concepts behind mature communication processes

- I yield to the floor for further discussion

